



## DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

### COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2016

#### **PH1020 (A3) Introduction to Philosophy: Knowledge and Reality – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Tom Enders                      **PHONE:** 780 539-2996  
**OFFICE:** C-415    **E-MAIL:** tenders@gprc.ab.ca  
**OFFICE HOURS:** By arrangement with instructor.

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** NONE

#### **REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

- Louis Pojman and James Fieser, editors. *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Readings posted on Moodle, class handouts, and internet readings.

#### **CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

This is an introduction to the classical problems of philosophy through study and critical discussion of selected philosophical classics and contemporary works. Emphasis will be placed on questions of the nature and extent of human knowledge and classic problems about the nature of reality and our place in it.

**CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS:** 3 credits / 3 hours per week

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lecture & discussion

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

This course will present selected classic problems of philosophy in the fields of epistemology and metaphysics, the fields in which questions are asked about the nature and limits of human knowledge and others about the nature of

reality. *They include the following questions which are not only key questions for a wide range of academic disciplines but are also major ones for decision-making in life.* How can we know anything? To what extent can we know what is real – and what underlies appearances? What is truth? Should we accept or reject the concept of objective truth? What am I? Do I have a mind or soul separate from my body? Do I remain “the same person” all my life? Why does that matter? Am I primarily an autonomous person or a social being? Can I and other people make truly free choices for which we can be reasonably held responsible? Does God exist? How can I know? Can a good God allow evil in the world? What is a good life? What is the meaning of life?

Examination of such questions should make their relationship to one another apparent. Consideration of them should also demonstrate the insights of philosophers making efforts to address and answer them.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of this course you should have a good initial understanding of selected classic problems of philosophy in the fields of metaphysics and epistemology - problems such as the ones noted above.

You should be able to explain the nature of the issues, key concepts used in discussions of them, and main positions taken on them by noted philosophers.

You should be making personal progress in assessing arguments made and taking and justifying positions of your own.

You will have made gains in thinking clearly, precisely, deeply and systematically about big questions of many kinds.

You will be better prepared for further study in Philosophy.

### **TRANSFERABILITY:**

UA, UC, UL, AU, GMU, CUCA, KUC, & Augustana

\*\*Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

Alpha Grade	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	Percentage Guidelines
A+	90-100	B+	76-79	C+	67-69	D+	55-59
A	85-89	B	73-75	C	64-66	D	50-54
A-	80-84	B-	70-72	C-	60-63	F	00-49

**EVALUATIONS:**

Attendance and Participation	10%
First assignment	15%
Second assignment	20%
First exam	25%
Final exam	30%

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

\* You are expected to devote time in the classroom to the class itself. Use of cell phones, tablets and laptops for non-class purposes is unacceptable. It is also not acceptable to socialize or do work on other courses (or even *other* work for this course) during the class.

\* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your own of any work you submit for grading at least until you have your work returned to you.

\*\* Students who miss an excessive number of classes (i.e. more than six) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar.

\*\*You are expected to write the final exam when scheduled by the Registrar's Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control. Take this into account when making any travel plans. Also note and observe other key dates during the term as provided in the Calendar.

**STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student

Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at  
<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/>

Or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at  
<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:**

#### **Topics and Tentative Schedule (reading list is to follow):**

Week 2 -

I. Introduction. What is philosophy? Pursuit of wisdom and truth. Good and bad arguments. Philosophy as a method and subject area. The origins and development of the discipline. Philosophy and science. Branches of philosophy. The value of a liberal arts education.

Week 3 -

II. Reading philosophy. First major readings. The value of philosophy. Philosophy and the good life.

Weeks 4 & 5 -

III. Epistemology. How much can we really know? How? Skepticism, rationalism, empiricism. The problem of induction. Kant's solution and attempt at reconciliation.

Week 6

IV. Truth and Objectivity. What is truth? Does objective truth exist, and if so, in which realms? Theories of truth. Antirealism, relativism and postmodernism. Morality and objectivity.

MIDTERM EXAM: Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Weeks 7 & 8 -

V. The Mind-Body Question. Is there an immaterial human mind? Dualism, materialism and identity theory. Behaviouralism. Functionalism and computers. Will computers ever be able to think and have minds – like ours?

Week 9 -

VI. Self and Personal Identity. Is there an enduring self, and if so, what is the nature of that self? Why answers matter, in marriage, punishment and more. Autonomous and social selves - and their implications for personal, political, social and academic life.

Weeks 10 & 11 -

VII. Free Will, Determinism and Responsibility. Nature vs. nurture? Could there be something more? What kind of entity can and should be held responsible for her and his actions?

Weeks 11, 12 & 13 -

VIII. Philosophy and Religion. Why philosophize about religion. What can we know, how? Faith and reason. Arguments for the existence of God. The problem of evil.

Week 14 -

IX. The meaning of life. Provided or created? Plato and Aristotle. Religion and the meaning of life. Existentialism. Other perspectives.

FINAL EXAM – on a date scheduled by the Registrar's Office.